

would correct this oversight and adjust the federal firefighters' retirement age so that it is equal to that of federal law enforcement officers. This legislation has bipartisan support and the endorsement of the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC).

Currently, over 2,500 federal firefighters are based in California—the largest percentage of federal firefighters in the country. A recent report issued by the General Accounting Office (GAO) stated that because of an aging work force there will be a shortage of qualified firefighters in the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management, and that the situation could have a direct impact on firefighters' safety. In fact, as reported recently in the Washington Post, 57 percent of Forest Service firefighters are 45 years of older (8/11/00). Because it takes 17–22 years of experience to become eligible for firefighters leadership positions, an extra two years of service would be of critical importance to a qualified and effective fire fighting operation.

Madam Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to bring this important legislation to the Floor for a vote and I commend the dauntless efforts of the firefighters in my District and across the nation.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. OSE. Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. OSE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 460.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed with an amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 4635. An act making appropriations for the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and for sundry independent agencies, boards, commissions, corporations, and offices for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2001, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate insists upon its amendment to the bill (H.R. 4635) "An Act making appropriations for the Department of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and for sundry independent agencies, boards, commissions, corporations, and offices for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2001, and for other purposes," requests a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon, and appoints Mr. BOND, Mr. BURNS, Mr. SHELBY, Mr. CRAIG, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Mr. KYL, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. STEVENS, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. HARKIN, Mr.

REID, Mr. BYRD, and Mr. INOUE, to be the conferees on the part of the Senate.

NATIONAL CHILDREN'S MEMORIAL DAY

Mr. OSE. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 415) expressing the sense of the Congress that there should be established a National Children's Memorial Day.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 415

Whereas approximately 80,000 infants, children, teenagers, and young adults of families living throughout the United States die each year from myriad causes;

Whereas the death of an infant child, teenager, or young adult of a family is considered to be one of the greatest tragedies that a parent or family will ever endure during a lifetime; and

Whereas a supportive environment and empathy and understanding are considered critical factors in the healing process of a family that is coping with and recovering from the loss of a loved one: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That—

(1) it is the sense of the Congress that there should be established a National Children's Memorial Day; and

(2) the Congress requests that the President issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to observe such a day with appropriate ceremonies and activities in remembrance of the many infants, children, teenagers, and young adults in the United States who have died.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. OSE) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. OSE).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. OSE. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on House Concurrent Resolution 415.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. OSE. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have the House consider House Concurrent Resolution 415, introduced by my colleague, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG).

This legislation expresses the sense of Congress that a National Children's Memorial Day should be established. Additionally, it asks the President to issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to observe such a day, with appropriate ceremonies and activities, in remembrance of the many infants, children, teenagers, and young adults in the United States who have died.

Madam Speaker, the death of a child at any age is a shattering experience for any family. By establishing a day to remember children that have passed

away, bereaved families from all over the country will be encouraged and supported in the positive resolution of their grief. It is important to families who have suffered such a loss to know that they are not alone. To commemorate the lives of these children with a special day would pay them an honor, and help to bring comfort to the hearts of their bereaved families.

For the past 2 years, the Senate has recognized the second Sunday in December as National Children's Memorial Day. Last year, the House passed a resolution similar to what we are considering here today.

As a husband, and father of two young girls, I can think of nothing more terrifying than losing one of mine. They are my daily source of joy and inspiration. Yet, approximately 80,000 infants, children, teenagers, and young adults die each year from any number of reasons.

After losing a child, parents and siblings are left with a void in their life. Questions are left unanswered. So many things are left unsaid. Those of us who have not experienced such loss are unable to adequately communicate our sympathy, and fail in our task to comfort the bereaved.

To this end, a support network can be of great assistance. The Children's Memorial Day provides an opportunity for these families to collectively express their pain and to form these support networks.

For example, on December 10, starting in New Zealand, candles will be lit for 1 hour, beginning at 7 p.m. local times, creating a 24-hour observance around the globe. This simple act goes a long way to help those who have lost a child, a grandchild, a sibling, or a friend, particularly during the December holiday season, when the loss is the most difficult to bear.

This simple and easy resolution may not seem like much to many, but I can assure the Members that to those families who have lost loved ones, the support that we show here today will go a long way in helping them cope with that loss.

It is important for families who have suffered such a loss to know they are not alone. Please help us in passing this resolution. I ask Members to express their support for this worthy and noble cause by voting aye. We carry the responsibility to honor and remember those who have died before their time. As compassionate concerned citizens, one of the best actions we can take is to support those who are left behind.

Madam Speaker, I encourage all Members to support this bill.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I agree with the gentleman from California (Mr. OSE), this is a very, very important resolution. I think when one looks at it on its